Meeting of the BBC Wales Committee

SUMMARY OF MINUTES

Monday 1 November 2017
Broadcasting House, Cardiff

ITEMS OF BUSINESS

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Audience and performance
   a) Director’s and audience reports for the Nation
   b) Audience films with Q&A
3. The market place and external environment
4. Public commitments and targets
5. Other business
   (a) Reinvestment – new editorial projects
   (b) BBC submission to S4C Review
   (c) Running of the Committees/external advisers
6. AOB
ATTENDANCE

Members:

- Ken MacQuarrie  Director, Nations and Regions (Chair)
- Elan Closs Stephens  Non-executive director
- Ian Hargreaves  Non-executive director

With:

- Rhys Evans  Head of Strategy & Education, Wales
  (for Rhodri Talfan Davies)
- Ian Haythornthwaite  Chief Operating Officer, Nations and Regions
- James Holden  Director, Marketing and Audiences, News
- Chris Sandford  Business Partner (for Phil Harrold)
- Audience members  For item 2b
- Geraldine Reilly  Business Manager, N&R (Secretary)
WALES COMMITTEE MINUTES – 1 November 2017

1. Welcome and introductions

1.1 The Committee were welcomed to the first meeting of the Wales Committee, concluding the first round of Nations Committees.

2. Audience and performance

a) Director’s Report for the Nation and Audience report

2.1 The Committee were given an update on the investment plans for Wales over the next three years. There would be three major drama series and the first comedy from Wales in a number of years.

2.2 The S4C Review told a strong story and S4C funding was guaranteed until 2021/22. The partnership with S4C was going well with planning continuing around S4C’s presence in Central Square.

2.3 The series Valley Cops had a very positive response and received two million requests on iPlayer. It played well amongst the younger audience, setting a high bar for the new investment programming.

2.4 The recent RAJAR results showed a strong and stable picture for Radio Cymru. Radio Wales performed less well with a loss in share over the past three years and a particular challenge around breakfast news.

2.5 The Committee were briefed on the plan, in the first half of 2018, to boost FM availability for Radio Wales from 79% to 91% by taking some of the Radio 3 spectrum.

2.6 Discussing the Audience Report, the Committee noted that General Impression scores for Wales were in line with or above the average and time spent with BBC television was good, with rugby being a key driver. Radio listening was high with, Radio 2 a big driver of consumption and reach. It was suggested that it would be worth looking at the overlap in listeners of Radio Wales and Radio 4.

2.7 It was also suggested that more information was required on how and where audiences were using the BBC, including on Netflix when it carried BBC
programmes.
b) Audience films with Q&A

2.8 The Committee were shown a film featuring the views of audience members, responding to a series of questions about the BBC. Those chosen were a mixture of social grades and ages and were selected by IPSOS Mori. The Committee then had the opportunity to meet some of the audience members and to discuss their views of the BBC.

3. The market place and external environment

3.1 The Committee noted a short paper on the general market context in Wales. There was a question as to what extent the BBC should fill the emerging gaps in the market place. The Assembly’s Cultural Committee was due to report back on journalism in Wales. It was noted that, with regard to online, there was a need to consider the different approaches adopted by BBC Wales News and Network News.

3.2 The Committee noted that the BBC’s relationship with the Welsh language had been a long and important one with investment from the BBC in the Welsh language at around c.£110m, It was noted that the BBC’s response to the S4C Review had been sent to the DCMS. A question was raised about the review and if it should have been a review of Welsh language provision rather than just of S4C. The Committee agreed that the paper set out the current position accurately.

4. Public commitments and targets

4.1 The Committee discussed a paper on Ofcom’s proposals for the BBC Operating Licence in Wales. It was noted that the papers taken at the Scotland, NI and England Committees would need to be updated in light of the recently published Ofcom regulations.
5. **Other Business**

   a) **Reinvestment – new editorial projects**

   5.1 This was covered in the director’s report (item 2a).

   b) **Running of the Committees/External Advisers**

   5.2 Having concluded each of the first Nations meetings, the full set would now be reviewed.

   5.3 The Committee discussed the opportunity for its views to be fed into the main BBC Board. It was agreed there needed to be a process to flag relevant issues to the Nations Committees in advance of Board meetings, perhaps through a regular issues paper.

6. **AOB**

   6.1 There were no items of other business.